

Minutes
Program Simplification Subcommittee
September 10, 2002
State Capitol, Room 328NW

Attendees:

Carol Amelong, DHCF/BIMA/QC	Sue Larson, LOPP
Jonathon Bader, WISCAP	Deb Lyons, Green Lake County
Dick Buschmann, Community Advocate	Carol Medaris, WCCF
Shirin Cabraal, LAW	Amy Mendel-Clemens, Call Center
Alesia Daniel, Milwaukee Co.	Wendy Metcalf, Marquette County
Monica Danley, UMOS	Diane Northrup, St. Croix County
Joanne Faber, ESS, Washington Co.	Sara Pynenberg, DHCF/BIMA/FS Policy
Vickie Jessup, DHCF/BHCE/QC	Edie Sprehn, DWD/DHFS Liaison
Jon Janowski, Hunger Taskforce	Rick Zynda, DHCD/BIMA –Chair person

Unable to Attend:

Christy Duhr – Richland County
Jim Jones, DHCF/BHCE, Deputy
John LaPhilliph, DHCF/BHCE
Wendy Metcalf – Marquette County
Marilyn Rudd – DHFS/DCHF/BIMA
Sara Shackleton – Dane County
Carol Medaris – WI Council on Children & Families

The second Program Simplification meeting was held on September 10 in Madison – Co-chairs are Rick Zynda, BIMA & Joanne Faber, Washington County. Eighteen of the members attended, which includes staff from state, local agencies and Community Based Organizations.

▪ **Application Revision Project** – Sara Pynenberg

Sara reported on the status of the revision of the FS only application form. The USDA Food & Nutrition Service (FNS) offered the assistance of a contracted vendor to 6-8 states to assist in redesigning application forms. We applied for and were approved to participate. The vendor, Kleimann Communications, has worked with many public agencies and is experienced in our types of forms. They will provide technical assistance to us by reviewing drafts and making recommendations.

- A FS-only application – we have a “draft” four page (back to back) form:
- Revised FS-only Rights and Responsibilities pamphlet will be developed.

The goal is to finalize the new application form by early November. The new application form will be placed on the Internet for downloading.

- **Farm Bill:**

Section 4107 - Simplified Definition of Resources – Sara Pynenberg

The group reviewed a draft Operations Memo on proposed new asset policy for Food Stamps. Under the new policy, only “counted” assets would be cash and balances in checking, share draft, or savings accounts in a bank or credit union. All other assets would be excluded in the FS eligibility and asset tests.

In addition, verification of counted assets would no longer be required unless the information provided by the FS applicant or recipient is questionable.

Issues discussed:

- If excludable asset information is not collected, the agency won’t know if the household has a resource that could be cashed in.

Suggestions – inform the client that if they have any assets and sell or cash them in, they must report this to the agency (include such instructions in the Rights & Responsibilities brochure).

Elderly/disabled are often Medicaid applicants/recipients, which requires reporting of all assets – thus the agency will be aware of them. This is the FS population that would likely have assets. Most families don’t enough assets to affect FS eligibility.

A CARES “self-declared” asset screen or code suggested.

Questions -

If a person has a CD that matures, and they reinvest it, does it continue to be exempt under the new policy?

It would be helpful to know how many FS cases are denied or closed due to excess assets.

Sara will be sending the draft Operations Memo to the FNS Regional Office in Chicago for their review and reaction to the proposed policy.

Note: After the September 10 meeting, FNS reviewed the Operations Memo and initially indicated that several more resource types must be included for FS - however we’re pursuing further clarification.

Section 4102 - Simplified Definition of Income – Sara Pynenberg

Student Financial Aid will be excluded for FS effective January 1, 2003. The CARES automation of Financial Aid for FS may take longer than the January 1st date. All other programs already exclude all types of Student Financial Aid.

- **Committee recommendations: Please review the attached position paper, it was revised following the September meeting.**

Section 4101 – Encouragement of Payment of Child Support

This section of the Farm Bill allows us to use Child support as an income exclusion – not an income deduction.

- **Pro** – reduces gross income
- **Con** – current recipients would possibly lose part of the 20% earned income deduction by changing to exclusion

This workgroup will require some data in order to determine how many cases would be affected. An additional consideration will be - CARES changes may be costly – we will need an estimate of this cost to assist in a discussion.

Per FS Data Warehouse (Dave Hippler):

“Over the last year, on average, 239 AGs that had CS expenses closed each month for being over the gross income limit. On average, 10,234 AGs close/are denied each month for any reason. So on average, over the last year, 2.33% of the AGs that close/are denied each month were AGs that had CS expenses and were close/denied for being over the gross income limit (reason 016).”

Next Meeting –

October 10 – 12:30 – 3:00 p.m. – Location – State Capitol, Room 225NW